

Tip for Parents – By Parents to Prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome

By parents of Parent Trust for Washington Children

All Babies Cry – Have a Plan!

Call the Family Help Line (1-800-932-4673) and get the checklist “What to Do When the Baby Cries.” Put the checklist up on the fridge and refer to it when the baby cries. Going through the checklist will help you feel like a good parent who has done everything you can think of to help your baby!

Remember the 10-Foot rule: When you are very frustrated or angry, make sure the baby is in a safe place and then stay 10 feet away from the baby until you have calmed down. Parents report that this simple rule has changed their lives and kept their children safe.

Know how to keep babies safe: Call the Family Help Line 1-800-932-HOPE (4673) for a “Safe Baby Resource Packet” which includes important information about the dangers of shaking the baby and using soft bedding. Read the packet and try to tell 3 other people about keeping our babies safe -- let’s get the word out!

I-am-a-good-parent list: Write down at least 3 reasons why you are a good parent. Put the list up where you can see it and refer to it on those days when you are pulling your hair out.

Babies do cry. Remember to tell yourself, all babies cry – sometimes parents cry too! Crying is a way that babies communicate and release stress. It is not meant to make you feel like a bad parent.

Sing away the stress: Learn to sing a lullaby. Babies love it and don’t care how well you sing. Singing a family song over and over again can calm the baby down – and you too!

I-love-my-baby list: Write down 5 things you love about your baby. Notice that your baby already has a unique personality! What makes your baby laugh? What makes your baby excited? Put the list up and refer to it during stressful times.

Grab the phone, not the baby: Have a list of 3 people or places that you can call when the stress of parenting is getting to you. Often, a 10-minute conversation with a person who really listens can make all the difference.

Move and breathe: When you are having a difficult day, exercise can really help. Wrap the baby up and go outside. Take deep breaths. Walk around the block. Just getting out of the house for a few minutes can relieve stress.

Remember to laugh: Laughter is a great stress reliever. Put cartoons or jokes up that make you smile. Keep toys around that you enjoy. Buy a book or video that you can pull out when you need a giggle. Call a buddy who always cracks you up. Parents need laughter in their lives!

Take a break of at least 20 minutes for yourself every day to do something that you enjoy. Caring for a baby is hard work. Listen to music, read, or take a hot bath – whatever helps you relax and re-charge your batteries. You deserve it and this daily investment will make you a better parent!